

## UNTANGLING THE LAW.

By Frederic J. Haskin.

Prominent teachers of the law throughout the country are urging that the time has come when the laws of the United States ought to be cleared of their uncertainties and their conflicts. Prof. Charles P. Sherman, Yale University, calls attention to the fact that the output of new laws throughout the land now stands at 20,000 per annum, and to this there must be added the thousands of reported decisions which modify or change former constructions of as many existing statutes. He declares that the laws of the United States today are the most intolerable in the world, if not in all human history. And all because of the lack of uniformity.

In showing how serious all this is, Prof. Sherman pictures the plight of a German or any other European judge who might be compelled to research in American law. He declares that the savant would find himself hopelessly lost in a maze of hundreds of laws, conflicting statutes and enactments, clarified by spasmodic codifications as widely apart as are the states themselves. The multiplicity of American laws, the contradictions they result in, the lack of uniformity of law from one state and another law for another state, and a third law for the United States "at a whine," clogs all our courts to such an extent that often justice itself is perverted, becoming long-delayed decisions come too late to relieve the litigants.

The laws of the federal government recently were codified. For, says Mr. Douglass, acting on the request of President Wilson, he has succeeded in forming a new French cabinet.

The new cabinet comprises radical, radical-socialists and socialists, with the exception of M. Le Brun and M. Raymond, who are regarded as moderates. All exceed M. Briand and M. Malvy in age, and in form, continue.

The Paris press receives the announcement of the formation of the new cabinet with disapproval and predicts a short life for it.

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If the codification of the federal law was in itself a task of years it can easily be imagined that it would be a tremendous undertaking to codify the hundreds of thousands of statutes that the forty-eight states have enacted and are attempting to enforce, and at the same time to cite the cases in which these laws have been interpreted. There are forty-eight legislatures in the country, and it would be difficult to find any two of the same mind on any given subject. The viewpoints of these bodies differ, the needs of the people vary, and the situations to be met are seldom the same. What Wisconsin supports, does not N. Y. or New Jersey? Kansas believes it would be a mistake to have a churning of state laws that even the best efforts of those who are working for uniformity can accomplish.

But there are some laws of state enactment which have a peculiar bearing on interstate affairs. For instance, the maritime and divorce laws of the various states provide possible opportunities to violate the laws of their own state and still go unscathed. Uniform railroad laws and uniform bills of lading are desirable, as are the other laws of interstate commerce, but which are without the province of federal jurisdiction.

Prof. Sherman objects to the way in which the states plough ahead and enact laws which state looks solely to itself and with due regard to the rights of the people of other states. He says that all this is but the assertion of the doctrine of states' rights in another form. He would have one law for the whole United States, and he says that the enactment of diverse state laws is beneficial to only one class of citizens—i.e., the perfidious lawyers to whom a conflict of laws means augmented litigation. He would then meet with no good reason why all laws, state and national, should not be uniform, even though the United States is a country as large as Europe. It is in the interest of all to do so. In proof of this assertion he points to our uniform naturalization and admiralty laws, and insists that uniformity of law through congressional enactment, no matter what its nature, has never worked ill to the people.

The progress of the movement toward uniform laws in the United States has been made in so far as it covers matters of state law as all the states except five of the states have already passed the uniform negotiable instrument law, which was first published in 1906, and has been adopted by every state save the uniform warehouse receipts law. Ten states have accepted the uniform sales law, while it has taken up and passed the uniform bills of lading law. Six states have enacted the uniform law of foreign wills, the uniform stock transfer act, four the uniform descent act and three the uniform divorce law.

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There are other model laws that have been drafted or are under consideration by the conference of commissioners on uniform laws.

Are Being Urged.

Organized under the auspices of the American Bar Association, one of them is a uniform law on child labor, intending to equalize the working conditions of children in all the states. A uniform marriage and marriage license act has proved to be one of the most desirable pieces of legislation that could be enacted. The thousands of marriages of runaway couples every week in the year, in which couples who could not legally marry at home run away to another state and are married there, defying the law of their own state in doing, attest to the necessity of a uniform marriage license law. The practice is not common that two citizens realize the gravity of the situation. A state may enact and attempt to enforce a law exacting high matrimonial standards, but it is not set aside by the simple expedient of skipping across the border. Here is not only a wilful tampering with the sacred institution of marriage, but the delictum defined by citizens of the land of the commonwealth whose citizens they are.

A uniform workmen's compensation law has also been recommended. This need of uniformity is apparent in the case of mechanics' liens, which are so diverse that they are almost at cross purposes in many communities.

Interest in taxation is two other legal phases of our great interstate importance that uniform laws covering their general features are asked by the conference. One of these is the question of a uniform law on the taxation of property for taxation purposes. On the one hand, thousands of unscrupulous tax dodgers avoid taxation on much of their property, and consider that because they do not have a right to claim it, other thousands, on the other hand, pay double taxes because they feel that the law so requires, paying both in the state where the property is situated and in the state of their residence.

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Those who advocate uniformity of the laws by the co-operation of the several states believe that it is only necessary that this uniformity shall apply merely to those problems that are more than local importance, leaving all other matters to the independent action of the various

legislatures. They urge the states to work together in the enactment of uniform legislation, where such action is necessary, and declare that if they fail to do so the Supreme Court of the United States will continue its gradual extension of federal control where state control has failed to conserve the interests of all the people.

Speaking broadly, there are three points of view in regard to the problem of uniform laws. Many agree in the opinion that the laws ought to be cleared of the confusion of our laws and court decisions in the codification of all business and private laws under the auspices of the federal government. Others insist that uniform public opinion ultimately must result in co-operative action by the legislatures of all the states. The third group feels that the time is imminent when the federal government, through its administrative power, will be compelled to take over the federal elements of our government save through a complete reorganization of the government itself. This group is one belief which is necessary. However, this group, which is small, agrees that changes are being made whenever the welfare of the business world is concerned. The bill on the Kenyon red light bill by the House, the Senate and the women, say they intend to force it into the open in the House, so that it can be voted on. The members of the committee who are to meet and organize this afternoon, Mrs. Mabel Goode, Miss Edna Hill, Mrs. Jessie Hardy Stude and Miss Dora Stevens. With these women is a hotel near Paris, suffering from injuries sustained about ten days ago in an automobile accident, according to advocates received here. It is said that an operation on one of his legs will be necessary.

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DOUMERGUE PICKS AIDS.

Press of Paris Predicts Short Life for New French Cabinet.

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## "RED LIGHTS" DOOMED IF WOMEN HAVE WAY

Local Committee Is Formed for the  
Elimination of Commercialized Vice.

A committee for the elimination of commercialized vice in the District is to be formed this afternoon at a meeting of the suffragists who made a trip through the city's red light district yesterday afternoon for the purpose of learning of conditions at first hand. The meeting is to be held at 4:30 o'clock at the home of Mrs. Irving Moller, 1729 H street, northwest.

The object of the committee is to obtain the speedy passage of the Kenyon red light bill by the House. The bill has already passed the Senate and the women, say they intend to force it into the open in the House, so that it can be voted on. The members of the committee who are to meet and organize this afternoon are Mrs. Mabel Goode, Miss Edna Hill, Mrs. Jessie Hardy Stude and Miss Dora Stevens. With these women is a hotel near Paris, suffering from injuries sustained about ten days ago in an automobile accident, according to advocates received here. It is said that an operation on one of his legs will be necessary.

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SCULPTOR SIMMONS DIES.

Designed the Equestrian Statue of Logan in This City.

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Mr. Simmons was born at Webster, Me., in 1859. Since 1886 he had lived mostly in Rome. His work included about fifteen monuments, among them being a G. A. R. monument of Gen. Grant and an equestrian monument of Gen. Logan in Washington, and numerous ideal statues.

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